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(56) Documents Cited

GB 2274786 A US 4787632 A

(58) Field of Search

UK CL (Edition O) A6D D11X

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(54) **Golf ball retrieving device**

(57) A golf ball retrieval device has a plurality of resilient fingers able to deflect to receive and retain a golf ball. It also has a single further finger pointing in the opposite direction which may be inserted into a hole in the end of a golf club handle. When so inserted the club can be inverted and the retriever used to lift balls from the ground or to recover balls from difficult to access locations.

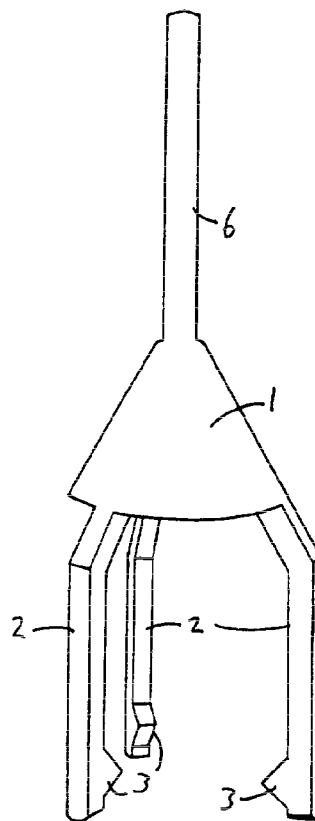
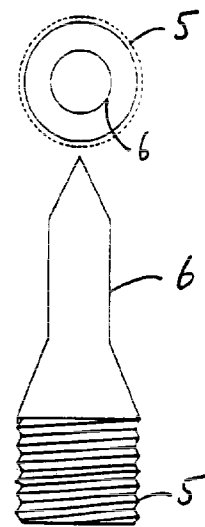
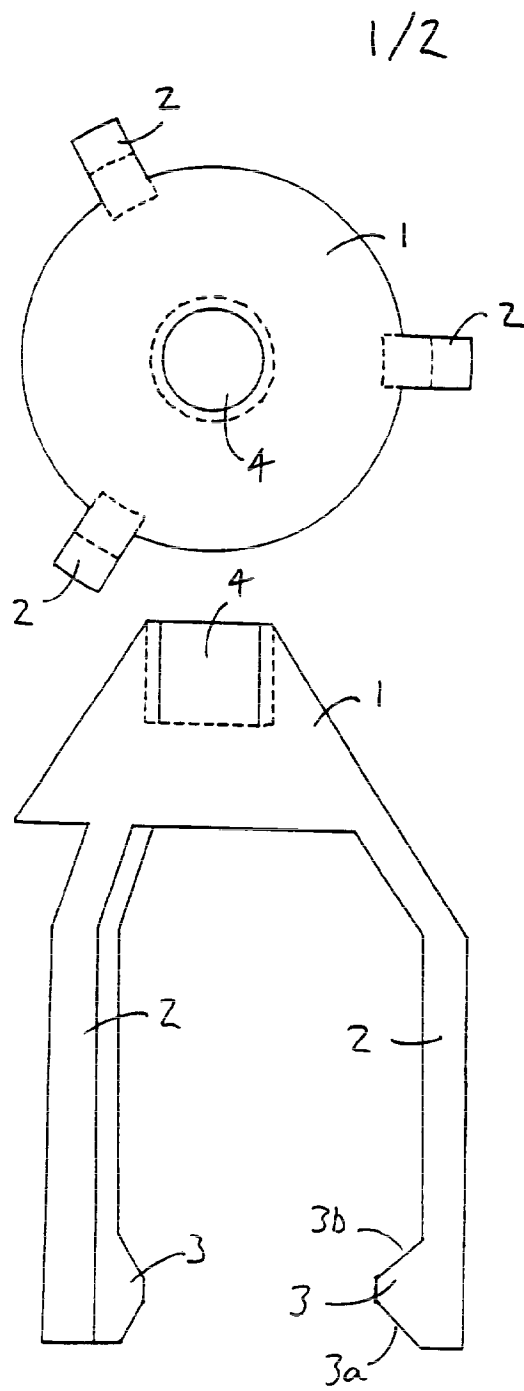


Fig. 3

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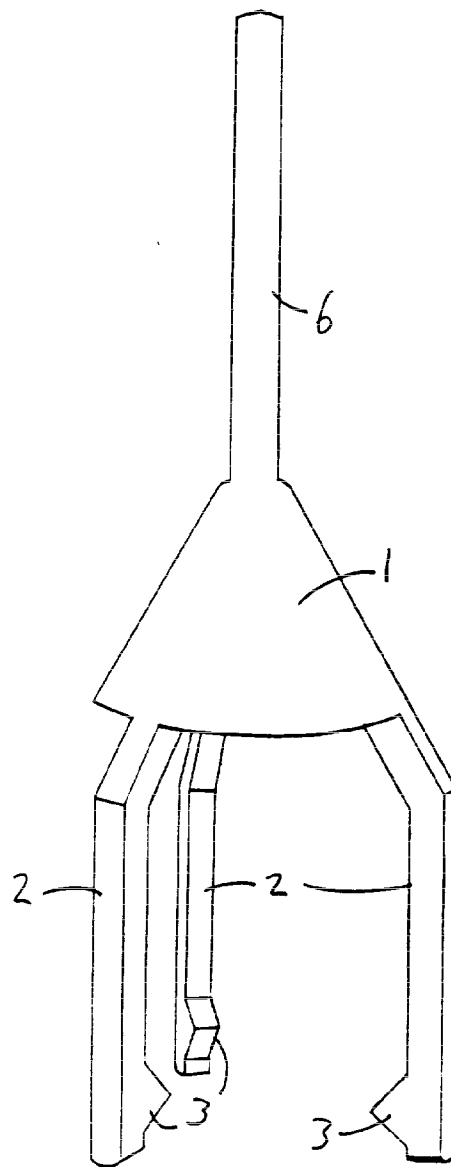


Fig. 3

GOLF BALL RETRIEVING DEVICE

The present invention relates to an improved golf ball retrieving device.

Golf ball retrievers are well known and are known to be useful for instance for recovering golf balls from hazards found on golf courses, such as ditches, streams and deep rough. Also they have been proposed for general use by players who may have difficulty stooping down, for instance to recover a golf ball from the hole.

In essence, golf ball retrievers generally comprise a ball retaining device at one end of a shaft, the other end of which can be held by a golfer using the retrieval device. It has previously been known to provide the ball retaining part in the form of a cup or a coiled wire. Also, for instance from US patent 4,313,632, it is known to provide the ball retaining part in the form of a number of resilient members, between which the ball is retained. As mentioned above, the ball retaining part is located at one end of a shaft, and, while such a shaft may be telescopic, this shaft provides additional weight and volume which must be carried by a golfer along with his clubs.

As a consequence, it is also known to provide golf ball retrieving devices in the form of a ball retaining part which may be attached, temporarily or permanently to the handle of a golf club. The golf club shaft therefore provides the above mentioned shaft for use as the golf ball retrieving device. Examples of these are shown in US patent 4,787,632, GB-A-2282973, GB-A-2274786 and GB-A-2246517. All of these devices are attached the handle of a golf club by means of a tube or collar which fits over the end of the golf club handle, either permanently or temporarily.

Such devices have certain disadvantages. If such device is to attached to the handle of a golf club it may impede the proper holding of the club by the

player or may cause a visual distraction, reducing the player's concentration on the shot to be played. If such a device is repeatedly attached and removed it is possible that damage may occur to the golf club handle grip, which is clearly undesirable.

An object of the present invention is therefore to overcome the above mentioned disadvantages and provide a golf ball retrieving device which may be repeatedly attached to and disengaged from the handle of a golf club without causing damage to the golf club grip.

In particular the present invention provides a golf ball retrieval device having a first portion arranged to receive and retain a golf ball, and a second portion arranged for attachment to the handle of a golf club, the second portion comprising a finger which may be inserted into a hole in the end of the golf club handle.

The finger which is arranged to attach the device to a golf club is designed such that it is a sufficiently tight friction fit in the hole in the golf club handle so as to provide for sufficient force transfer to allow for the lifting of a retained golf ball. However, being a friction fit it can easily be removed from the club when not in use.

Clearly the present invention can be used in conjunction with a specially provided hole in the end of golf club handles, but preferably the finger is sized to fit into a tee retaining hole, commonly found in the end of a golf club handle grip. In this preferred arrangement the retrieval device according to this invention can be easily used with already existing equipment.

In the preferred arrangement the first portion of the device, which is for receiving and for retaining the golf ball, comprises a plurality of resilient legs extending away from the finger of the second portion, which can deflect away from each other to allow

the reception of a golf ball and the resilience of which retains the golf ball for retrieval.

Also in the preferred arrangement the first and second portions of the device are moulded integrally, although it is possible to provide these two portions separately, with for instance a screw thread to join them together.

Further features and advantages of this invention will be apparent from the following description of preferred embodiment, taken in conjunction with the attached drawings in which

Figure 1 shows plan and elevation views of a first part of a first preferred embodiment;

Figure 2 shows plan and elevation views of a second part of the first preferred embodiment; and

Figure 3 shows a perspective view of a second preferred embodiment of this invention.

Figures 1 and 2 show plan and elevation views of the two parts which form the first embodiment of the golf ball retrieval device of the present invention.

Referring firstly to Figure 1 this shows the ball receiving end retaining part of this embodiment. This part comprises a body portion 1 which, in this embodiment is provided in the form of a cone. Depending from the body portion 1 are three legs 2 spaced equally around the circumference of the cone forming the body portion 1. Adjacent the end distal from the portion 1 each leg 2 has an inwardly directed projection 3 having a lower cam surface 3a and an upper cam surface 3b. In this embodiment the body portion 1, legs 2, and projections 3 are moulded as one piece from an appropriate plastic material. This part is designed such that the space between the three legs 2 is of a size appropriate to accommodate a golf ball of the standard size, a ball being retained within the space by the projections 3.

There is also provided in body portion 1 a threaded hole 4. This hole is designed to receive and

retain the second part of the golf ball retrieval device according to this embodiment, which is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2 shows plan and elevation views of the second part of the golf ball retrieval device according to this embodiment of the invention, and it comprises a threaded section 5 and a finger section 6. The threaded section 5 is adapted to be screwed into hole 4 in body portion 1 of the first part of this embodiment and finger portion 6 is designed so as to be inserted and retained as a friction fit into a tee retaining hole such as is commonly provided in the handle of a golf club. It would therefore be appreciated that, once assembled by the attachment of screw thread 5 into threaded hole 4, the golf ball retrieval device according to this embodiment can be easily attached to and detached from the handle of a golf club.

In use, therefore, the golf ball retrieval device is attached to the handle of a golf club, the blade end of which is then held by a user and the legs 2 are positioned over a golf ball to be retrieved such that cam surfaces 3a rest on the ball. Further force towards the ball causes a reaction applied to cam surfaces 3a which flexes legs 2 outwards enabling projections 3 to pass over the ball and the ball to pass into the space between legs 2. On lifting the ball retrieval device the weight of the golf ball is insufficient to flex the legs outwards again and consequently the ball is lifted with the retrieval device.

When it is desired to remove the ball from the retrieval device this can be achieved simply by holding the golf ball and pulling it away from body portion 1, utilizing cam surfaces 3b to deflect the legs outwards again so as to permit the ball to pass between projections 3.

Use of this device is therefore very simple but it can contribute significantly to the ease of

retrieving a golf ball.

As mentioned above, in this embodiment the first part, shown in Figure 1, is conveniently manufactured by injection moulding from a plastics material. The second part shown in Figure 2 may be formed of any convenient material, for instance a metal such as aluminium.

Figure 3 shows, in a perspective view, a second preferred embodiment of this invention. The principle of operation of this embodiment is identical to that of the first embodiment, the difference being that the two parts of the device shown in respect of the first embodiment in Figures 1 and 2 respectively, are formed as a integral piece. In particular the whole device may be formed as a single injection moulding. The same reference numerals are used in Figure 3 for the parts of the second embodiment which correspond to those of the first embodiment, and as can be seen this embodiment comprises a main body portion 1, having depending legs 2 with projections 3 and a finger 6 for insertion into a golf club handle.

In these embodiments, the finger 6 may have a diameter of approximately 5mm thereby forming a sufficiently tight friction fit in a typical tee hole in the end of a golf club handle. Another, preferred, arrangement is for the finger 6 to taper towards the distal end, for instance from approximately 6mm to 4mm, to fit a range of tee hole sizes.

CLAIMS:

1. A golf ball retrieval device having a first portion arranged to receive and retain a golf ball, and a second portion arranged for attachment to the handle of a golf club, the second portion comprising a finger which may be inserted into a hole in the end of the golf club handle.

2. A golf ball retrieval device according to Claim 1 in which said first portion comprises a plurality of resilient members extending away from the finger of the second portion, which members are adapted to deflect away from each other to allow the reception of a golf ball therebetween.

3. A golf ball retrieval device according to Claim 2 in which each of said resilient members is provided with an inwardly directed projection whereby a golf ball may be retained between the resilient members.

4. A golf ball retrieval device according to Claim 2 or 3 in which said resilient members are injection moulded from a plastics material.

5. A golf ball retrieval device according to any one of Claims 1 to 4 in which said first portion and said second portion are injection moulded as an intrical piece.

6. A golf ball retrieval device according to any one of Claims 1 to 4 in which there is provided a screw connection between said first portion and said second portion.



Application No: GB 9601472.5
Claims searched: 1-6

Examiner: David Whitfield
Date of search: 13 February 1996

Patents Act 1977
Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.O): A6D D11X

Int Cl (Ed.6): A63B 47/02

Other:

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
Y	GB2274786A (PUGH) (WHOLE DOCUMENT)	4,5
X:Y	US4787632 (NIGRELLI) (" ")	1-3:4,5

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
&	Member of the same patent family	E	Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.